

Internal
S/001/0018
S/001/0047

Peter Brinton <peterbrinton@utah.gov>



west desert rare species - conversation Jenna Lewinsohn (USFWS)

Paul Baker <paulbaker@utah.gov>

Wed, May 18, 2016 at 7:29 AM

To: Peter Brinton <peterbrinton@utah.gov>

I read through the operation and reclamation practices again and don't see anything that could be construed as requiring protection by a small mine. Even the general purposes in the Act are really vague: "It is necessary to alter the surface of the earth to extract minerals required by our society, but this should be done in such a way as to minimize undesirable effects on the surroundings."

I believe our only choice is to try for voluntary cooperation through avoidance, such as trying to find alternative locations for the operations.

On Tue, May 17, 2016 at 12:06 PM, Peter Brinton <peterbrinton@utah.gov> wrote:

This morning I heard back from Jennifer (Jenna) Lewinsohn from the US Fish & Wildlife Service, who I had informed about the recent interest in expanding the Courgraph mine (S/001/0018) very near to (or into) areas with Frisco clover populations. She said that it looks like the listing for the three rare plants is being moved up, possibly to within the next few months. She wants to make sure that we use what time we have now to prepare. She said that a state biologist position is being opened up for working on issues like this, but it may come a little late to work on the Courgraph mine if an expansion is imminent. The biologist position opens this next fiscal year, reportedly.

Jenna would like to meet with us and others some time within the next month or two to discuss options for approaching and working with both operators of the Courgraph and Southern White / Mountain Rose mines for mitigation (e.g. avoidance by trying to identify other legitimate mining areas without populations). She plans to talk with SITLA and another entity ESMF(?) first, so we have no plans yet.

I let her know that my understanding is that we don't have authority in our small mine rules authorizing us to require conservation, but that I would defer to you as a biologist and as my boss. I told her that we're open to encouraging the operators to avoid these rare plant populations, and also to help with other mitigation (test seedings on regraded areas, for example). I also stressed that we would want to make sure that we understand the current distribution of these plants before we get very far down that road, potentially unnecessarily.

I also invited her to visit the Courgraph site with Robert Fitts (or a co-worker) sometime on June 6 or June 7 to identify the Frisco clover. She may or may not be able to meet.

Peter

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Peter Brinton
Environmental Scientist/Engineer III
Utah Division of Oil, Gas & Mining
Office Phone: 801-538-5258
Days: M - Th, Every Other Friday
Hours: 8:00am - 5:30pm

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Paul Baker
Minerals Program Manager
Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining
801-538-5261